

Conference (The) 14-11

THE CONFERENCE OF THE DELEGATES APPOINTED BY THE BOARDS OF CENSORS FOR THE DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETIES OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

The conference of the delegates from the Boards of Censors of the District Medical Societies throughout the commonwealth met June 11, at 19 Boylston Place. Twelve members were present, accredited to the various societies. Dr. John Crowell of Essex North District was chosen chairman, and Dr. Albert N. Blodgett, of Suffolk, clerk.

METHODS OF EXAMINATION.

The first business was the report of the committee appointed last year for the purpose of ascertaining the methods employed by the various Boards of Censors in the State, in order to compare these methods and to adopt some system which shall be more nearly uniform in the various sections of the Commonwealth, and more thoroughly conform with the requirements of the By-Laws of the Massachusetts Medical Society than has heretofore been the case.

After a few introductory remarks the following report was presented:—

The Committee appointed at the conference of Censors held in Boston, June 14, 1882, to "ascertain the methods of examination used by the several Boards of Censors, etc." submit the following report.

In the early part of May the following note was mailed to the secretary of each District Society:—

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

To Dr. ———

Secretary ——— District Society.

Dear Sir,—At a conference of censors held in Boston, June 14, 1882, it was voted "That a Committee of three be appointed, whose duty it shall be to ascertain the methods of examination used by the several Boards of Censors, and to request the censors to make such suggestions upon this subject as may occur to them."

An answer is respectfully requested before June 1st.

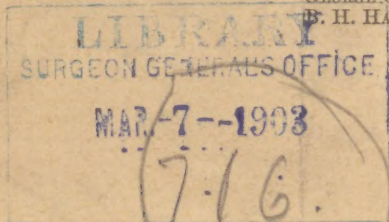
The Committee would urge upon your Board the importance of sending two delegates to the Conference of Censors to be held in Boston during the next annual meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

J. T. G. NICHOLS, Middlesex South.

GEORGE C. McCLEAN, Hampden.

F. H. HARTWELL, Worcester North.

Committee.



Answers have been received from the following districts: Barnstable, Bristol North, Bristol South, Essex North, Essex South, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex East, Middlesex South, Plymouth, Suffolk.

For the Committee,

J. T. G. NICHOLS, *Chairman.*

The Barnstable District Medical Society appointed me to answer this communication. I can only say that our Society has endeavored to comply with all the requirements of the parent society in regard to admission of new members. Aside from documentary evidence (diplomas), we invariably institute a thorough oral, and frequently a written, examination, and pay particular attention to the Practice of Medicine and Obstetrics. We choose to insist upon a thorough practical examination rather than one directed to details of a more minute character. The fact that our society frequently rejects an applicant, I think is evidence of our thoroughness.

Very respectfully yours,

BENJ. D. GIFFORD,
for Barnstable District Medical Society.

May 12, 1883.

TAUNTON, May 24, 1883.

DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—The mode of examination for the Bristol North District is as follows, viz.: two written questions are submitted by each censor (each censor having a particular branch) to each candidate for admission. The answers to be in writing. If time permits, an oral examination follows the written. Hoping you will pardon delay in answering,

I remain yours, etc.,

E. F. GALLIGAN, *Secretary.*

NEW BEDFORD, May 29, 1883.

DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—In answer to your letter, I will state that it is the custom with our district society to require a written application from the candidate. This application is handed in six months before he comes up for examination.

Our object in doing this is to make inquiries in regard to his character and standing in the community and with the profession. Our examinations are conducted orally. Each censor examines the candidate on one or more branches, and then if he has a majority of the votes of the censors he is admitted.

The voting is by ballot.

Our questions are mostly of a practical character.

Very truly yours,

A. MARTIN PIERCE,
Secretary Bristol South District Medical Society.

NEWBURYPORT, May 11, 1883.

DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—In reply to your circular, I am happy to state that the censors of the Essex North District Medical Society give candidates for admission to the society a practical oral examination in those branches which are taught in the recognized medical colleges. Drs. John Crowell of Haverhill and J. F. Terry of Newburyport have been appointed delegates to the Conference of Censors to be held in Boston during the next annual meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

Yours respectfully,

GEORGE W. SNOW, *Secretary.*

Dear Doctor,—The note from your committee, asking about our methods of examination, etc., was duly received.

In our examination we follow strictly Article I. of the By-Laws of the State Society; that is, we require candidate to exhibit diploma, and to show that he possesses the other qualifications specified in Article I. We then examine upon the several branches named—each member of the Board being present, and hearing every answer given,—usually asking from five to ten questions upon each subject. We have usually confined the written part of the examination to the writing of prescriptions and reports of cases. Each candidate is examined in private, and a vote taken by the Board upon his admission.

Very truly,

T. KITTRIDGE,

for Essex South District.

DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS, Cambridge, Mass.:

My dear Doctor,—Your favor received. My suggestion was not material, and your circular, as you say, covers the ground. It occurred to me, after writing, that you might have struck off your copies. The Committee of Councillors, to which you referred, and of which I was a member, after mature deliberation, got round to their starting point, and recommended that existing laws be enforced, as you know.

I report for our district by sending you a copy of the questions used at our last meeting. There were three candidates, only one of whom was admitted, the other two will come up again in October. We mean business, and hope to keep the standard up here, at our end of the State.

Sincerely yours,

GEO. C. McCLEAN.

SPRINGFIELD, May 18, 1883.

TO DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—Your communication from the committee of Censors is at hand. In reply I would say that nearly all the men who present themselves for examination are men well known to the Board, whom we are anxious to pass with a merely formal examination: men with diplomas from first-class schools.

When others present themselves, which has never been the case within my recollection, they are examined with care. I would also call your attention to the fact, that the advantages of belonging to the "Hampshire District Branch of the Massachusetts Medical Society" are not apparent to most of the physicians about here, and our greatest difficulty is in inducing the good men to join us, not in keeping the bad men out.

If you legislate for this part of the State on the assumption that any one is, or is likely to be, hungering and thirsting to join the Society, you will make a sad mistake.

Yours truly,

CHAS. W. COOPER,

Sec. of Censors for Hampshire.

READING, June 6, 1883.

DR. J. T. G. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—Our Censors have no suggestions to offer your committee.

The Board will be represented at the meeting called for June 14th.

I appreciate the importance of concerted action in the matter of elevating the standard for admission into our Society.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE E. PUTNEY,

Secretary, Middlesex East District.

BROCKTON, May 9, 1883.

DR. NICHOLS:

Dear Sir,—In answer to your letter, as to the method of the different Boards of Censors in the examination of candidates, I will simply write that the examination of candidates, in the Plymouth District Medical Society, is generally a written one, but sometimes it is partly written and partly oral.

Each candidate has two questions in each branch of study, and each of the Censors takes one or more of the branches of study from which he formulates the questions.

Generally the examination lasts about two hours, after which the papers are examined, each Censor examining those which he furnished. Upon the result of the examination depends the admission or rejection of the candidates, provided their moral character, etc., are right.

In regard to the sending of delegates to the conference of Censors during the annual meeting, as there will be no more meetings of our society until July, I will take the liberty of naming Drs. H. F. Borden of Brockton, and H. W. Dudley of Abington as delegates.

I suppose they will receive proper notice of the time and place of holding the meeting.

Yours truly,

J. E. BACON,
Secretary of Plymouth D. M. S.

The Censors of the Middlesex South District, having found that a candidate is qualified for examination, subject him to an oral examination in the branches of study specified in Article I. of the By-Laws of the Massachusetts Medical Society. Certain branches of study are assigned to each Censor. Of late years, a few written questions in two or more branches have been given. A ballot is then taken upon the admission of the candidate. A majority of the present Board of Censors is in favor of making the written examination still more prominent. They think it quite as fair to the candidate as an oral examination, while it gives the Censors written evidence of the justice of their decision, should it be adverse to the candidate.

J. T. G. NICHOLS, *for the Censors.*

19 EXETER STREET, May 9, 1883.

My dear Sir,—In reply to your committee's inquiry I would report that the method of examination, pursued by the Suffolk Board of Censors, is as follows:—

(1.) The applicants first present their diplomas to the Secretary, who presents them to the Board. The Board then vote whether or not to admit said applicant to examination.

(2.) The examination consists of an oral examination of each candidate by each Censor for from three to five minutes.

The division of branches among the different Censors, *i. e.* of the subjects upon which it is required by By-Law I. of the Massachusetts Medical Society, that each candidate should be examined, is by mutual consent.

The written examination is then held, the paper consisting of two questions from each Censor, or sometimes only one; the time allotted for this examination is two hours. The books in which the candidates write are numbered and sent to the different Censors, to mark, who thus do not know the names of the men whose books they mark. At a subsequent meeting the marks are handed in, the oral and the written added together, and divided by two. No candidate falling below fifty per cent. is admitted, but the Censors do not consider themselves bound to admit those averaging over fifty per cent., if there is anything prejudicial to their moral character known.

I enclose specimen examination papers.

Very respectfully,

H. C. HAVEN,
Secretary Suffolk District Board of Censors.

CENSORS' EXAMINATION, JUNE 2, 1881.

- (1.) Give the position and relations of the kidneys.
- (2.) Diagnosis and treatment of impacted fracture of lower end of radius.
- (3.) State the uses of opium; action; forms; doses; active principle; antidotes.
- (4.) What is a tonic? a stimulant? an escharotic? an emetic? a sedative? a cathartic? Give examples of each.
- (5.) What organs are concerned in digestion, and what part is played by each in the process.
- (6.) Classify Phthisis, and describe briefly the gross appearances of the most important changes found in the viscera.
- (7.) Give the diagnostic points which distinguish *accidental* and *unavoidable* hæmorrhage at the time of labor.
- (8.) How is an *arrest* distinguished from an *impaction* of the head within the cavity of the pelvis?
- (9.) Describe what you consider to be the proper method of disposing of the drainage of an inland country house 60×50 feet, standing on a lot of two acres, and dependent for its water supply on a well ten feet from the house. [There is no stream of water in the vicinity.]
- (10.) Give the symptoms of, and the differential diagnosis between, Dilatation of the Heart and Pericarditis with Effusion.

CENSORS' EXAMINATION, JUNE 7, 1883.

- (1.) Give the contents of the right iliac region, and their relations.
- (2.) What are the varieties of club-foot—their causes and treatment?
- (3.) Describe the process of digestion.
- (4.) Enumerate and briefly describe the appearances of the chief affections of the lungs.
- (5.) Whence are Arsenic, Iodine, Mercury, derived? Method of preparation? Forms of each for medicinal use? Signs of poisoning from each, and antidote.
- (6.) What is a stimulant? A tonic? A sedative? An emetic? A cathartic? Action of each, with written prescriptions, and directions for use?
- (7.) Give the differential diagnosis between dysentery and catarrh of the large intestine.
- (8.) Describe a case of acute capillary bronchitis, with directions for treatment.
- (9.) Give a brief outline of a normal labor.
- (10.) Name any very dangerous complication which might arise during or after birth, and say what you would do.

HAMPDEN DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION, HELD APRIL 17, 1883.

ANATOMY.

- (1.) Describe the hip joint.
- (2.) Describe the male urethra.
- (3.) Describe the female perinæum.

PHYSIOLOGY.

- (1.) Composition and functions of the gastric juice.
- (2.) What is respiration?
- (3.) Functions of the anterior and posterior columns of the spinal cord.
- (4.) Functions of the sympathetic.

- (5.) Functions of the cerebrum.
- (6.) Forces producing the circulation of the blood.

GENERAL CHEMISTRY.

- (1.) Sulphuric Acid, give composition, preparation, and compounds.
- (2.) Preparation of Hydrogen.
- (3.) Compounds of Iodine.

MATERIA MEDICA AND THERAPEUTICS.

- (1.) Action and doses of (a) Iodine, (b) Iodide Potass.
- (2.) Citrates and acetates, how changed in the system.
- (3.) Action and doses of (a) Aconite, (b) Pilocarpine, (c) Belladonna and Atropia.
- (4.) Name and give doses of mercurials in common use.
- (5.) Action of Opium. Give its alkaloids, and doses of principal ones.

MEDICAL CHEMISTRY.

- (1.) Varieties and appearance of urinary calculi.
- (2.) Blood corpuscles, how distinguished.
- (3.) Tests for Arsenic.
- (4.) Tests for Albumen.
- (5.) Tests for Sugar.

PATHOLOGY.

Give pathology and morbid anatomy of

- (1.) Stricture of the urethra.
- (2.) Pneumonia.
- (3.) Rheumatoid arthritis.
- (4.) Typhoid fever.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

- (1.) Diagnosis and treatment of acute articular rheumatism.
- (2.) Differential diagnosis of intercostal neuralgia and pleuritis.
- (3.) Diagnosis of apoplexy.
- (4.) Differential diagnosis of true croup and capillary bronchitis.
- (5.) Diagnosis and treatment of pneumonia.
- (6.) Diagnosis of chronic Bright's.

SURGERY.

- (1.) Hernia, varieties, diagnosis, and treatment.
- (2.) Dislocation of the shoulder joint.
- (3.) Describe ischio-rectal abscess, and how treated.
- (4.) What are the secondary symptoms of syphilis?
- (5.) Removal of foreign bodies from the ear.

OBSTETRICS.

- (1.) At eight months, os undilated; liquor amnii escaped; no pains; no flowing; give the treatment.
- (2.) Treatment of post-partum hæmorrhage.
- (3.) Diagnosis of twin pregnancy.
- (4.) Treatment of prolapse of the funis.
- (5.) Treatment when an arm is found in the vagina.
- (6.) What are the usual signs of pregnancy?

It was voted that the report of the committee be received and placed on file.

DR. BLODGETT spoke of the increasing interest manifested by the Censors of the District Societies in the comparison of methods, and the great manifest diversity still existing in the requirements of the several Boards. The supposed existence of great diversity of opinion upon this point was the reason for calling the first general conference of censors, and the able manner in which the committee of last year has acquitted itself in the delicate mission which was intrusted to it, has proved the need for a nearer approach to some definite standard of excellence as the requirement for admission to the Massachusetts Medical Society, which shall find application throughout the State.

SPECIAL MEETING OF DISTRICT CENSORS.

DR. SABINE, delegate from Norfolk, stated that at the conference of last year his society was not represented, owing to the fact that the then chairman took the ground that, according to the By-laws of the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Board of Censors could not appoint delegates to the meeting. The annual meeting of that society is held in May of each year, and delegates cannot be appointed to attend the June meeting without the calling of a special meeting of the Censors of that district for this purpose. In the opinion of the chairman this could not be done, and therefore the Norfolk Society was without representation at that time. Much good could doubtless be accomplished by meetings of delegates from the various local boards for consultation and comparison.

DR. NICHOLS, of Middlesex South, remarked that the Censors of the district societies were only allowed to hold meetings at the same time and place as the stated meetings of the district societies. No special meeting can be called for any purpose whatsoever.

DR. BLODGETT proved from the records of the Suffolk Censors that a special meeting for the examination of candidates was held on certainly one occasion at a different date from either of the times specified in the By-laws; and there seems to be no good reason why such special meetings should not be held whenever the duties of the Censors toward the State Society demand.

DR. CUTTER, of Middlesex South, stated that he has studied the by-laws, and finds nothing therein to prohibit the holding of special meetings of the Board of Censors. Acting upon this ground, the Censors of his district held such a meeting, and were called to account for the same by the then President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, Dr. Williams, who contended that the By-laws did not allow the Censors to meet at other than the periods stated in Art. xx.

DR. CROWELL has until recently supposed that no meeting of Censors could be adjourned, and thought that no special meeting could be called.

DR. NICHOLS said that the Censors were subject to a fine for failing to meet for the examination of candidates at the times specified in the By-laws. The Censors for his district held a special meeting for the examination of a candidate and were overhauled by the President of the State Society and mulcted in the amount of their fee for the examination, which has never yet been paid by the treasurer. The conflict was with the President of the State Society, not with the Society itself. Dr. Cotting, of Norfolk, has always been very positive that the Censors could hold no special meetings, and in those days they were not even allowed to adjourn.

DR. F. C. SHATTUCK, delegate from Suffolk, presented the following motion, which was unanimously carried: Voted, "That in the opinion of this meeting, the Boards of Censors of the District Societies are at liberty to hold special meetings at their pleasure, whether for the examination of candidates or for any other business within the scope of their functions."

Voted, "That the secretary of this meeting be requested to present this recommendation to the Board of Councillors of the Massachusetts Medical Society at their approaching meeting, in the urgent hope that they may consider the subject and take favorable action thereon."

CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF EXAMINATION.

DR. SHATTUCK stated that in a former meeting of delegates from the various boards, the fact was learned that the greatest laxity existed in the examination of candidates, and that the By-laws were in no sense complied with.

DR. CUTTER, of Middlesex South, observed that we may err in one direction as well as in the other. The effort of the Censors should be to gain all good men, and to exclude only those who are unworthy. Many members of the profession are no doubt excluded from the society from a feeling of humiliation accompanying the examination.

DR. NICHOLS said that he could not agree with the remarks of the last speaker. The examinations are no more than any young man just out of college should pass. In his own (Middlesex South) Society a young man—a graduate within a year from a medical college—presented himself for examination before the Censors. In certain branches his examination was satisfactory, in some others it was very unsatisfactory, and he was not allowed to pass. Some feeling now exists in regard to the justice of the rejection of this gentleman. Had some part of the examination

been conducted in writing, the Censors would have been able to present a much clearer defence of their action in excluding this candidate from the Massachusetts Medical Society. The written examination may be more tedious, but it is much more satisfactory. If the examination is printed, as in the Suffolk District, the amount of labor is much modified, it is fairer for the candidates, and is a record of the degree of rigor of the examination.

DR. HAMMOND, of Hampden, said that he hoped to gain a clearer idea of the duties of Censors. He felt that in his district injustice had been done toward one or two gentlemen who presented themselves for examination. The candidates were kept busy from eleven till four o'clock, but failed to pass. One of these men has been in practice for some years in another State, and was rejected because he could not answer the questions of the Censors.

DR. CUTTER thought it wrong to send the names of unsuccessful candidates to all the Boards of Censors in the State as is now done.

DR. DAVIS, of Worcester, said that the present method of examination is obstructed by want of time. In his district a written examination of a practical character is first held, and afterward a private oral examination, followed by an election to membership by ballot.

DR. RICH, of Worcester, thought the aim of the Society should be to win all *good* men. It might be wise to require a candidate to be a resident of the district for two years before admission to the Society, in order that he might become known to the Censors. There is an increasing interest in the Worcester District in a standard of examination which shall be uniform and of a suitable character.

DR. SMITH, of Berkshire, stated that in his district the Censors' examinations were the flimsiest he had ever known of; but that the character of the candidates was beyond reproach. The Berkshire Society is an earnest, active society. The presidents of the State Society can testify to the character of the Berkshire members. In that district the moral character of the candidates is first investigated; then the source of the diploma is ascertained. No questions, such as are used in Suffolk, are employed. We ignore some of the requirements of the By-laws. One recent candidate knows nothing of Latin, but is a successful practitioner in Sheffield. We don't know how he writes his prescriptions. We think that all men of good moral character and fair education should be gathered into the Society. At present it numbers about fifty men—the strong, working elements of the profession in that district, who are growing with the times, and are a bulwark of strength for the Society.

DR. SABINE, of Norfolk, spoke of the desirability of a uniform standard for the successive Boards of Censors in the same district,

instead of having a hard examination at one time, and a much easier one at another. The same Censors always examine upon some subject assigned to them during their term of service. In Norfolk District twenty-five per cent. of the candidates of recent years have been rejected. Another desirable thing would be a full board at every meeting of the Censors. Three members constituting a quorum at present, it is possible for two of the Censors to reject a candidate for membership in the State Society. Adjournments of the Board are otherwise necessary, and the Censors as well as the candidates are put to much inconvenience.

DR. CROWELL stated that the greatest reason for special meetings was found in the length of time required for the examination of the candidates on the day of the stated meetings of the Societies, by which the Censors as well as the candidates are prevented from participation in the proceedings of the Society.

DR. SHATTUCK thought that a great deal of good had come from the meetings of the Censors for conference. He then made the motion "that the committee of last year be continued for the purpose of watching the results of their action during the past year, and be requested to make a report upon the same subject at the next Conference of Censors." The motion was adopted.

On motion of Dr. Shattuck it was voted "that a copy of the minutes of this meeting be transmitted to the several Boards of Censors in the State, with the request that delegates be appointed from each Board to the next annual meeting." Adjourned.

To District Board of Censors of the Massachusetts Medical Society: In accordance with the vote contained in the last clause of the preceding report, you are hereby requested to appoint delegates to the next general meeting of the Censors, occurring at the time of the annual meeting of the State Society, in June next.

Yours respectfully,

ALBERT N. BLODGETT,
Clerk.